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**Media, Civil Society and the State in Democratic Politics in
Africa: The Case of South Africa**

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ABSTRACT

The last two decades or so has seen an explosion of interest in the question of civil society and the role of media and information in democratic politics. Specifically for Africa, the development of strong civil societies is seen as vital for democratization and democratic stability and in thinking about the State. Much of the literature has a prescriptive tone, suggesting that the development of privately owned media enterprises is the key to the emergence of a fully functioning public sphere, in which government wrongdoing will be exposed and democratic debate can take place. In much of the writing, particularly by political scientists, dependence on the state is the main factor, along with resource constraints, lack of training, and inability to reach areas of the population that cripples media and its ability to nourish the free flow of ideas in civil society. However, this paper is less interested in how much we can expect from the kind of institutional reform implied by the scholarship mentioned above, but rather from the assumptions about the role of the state and the place of media in African politics. The paper will discuss these issues in the context of a very advanced and well-developed media system – that of democratic South Africa – to see how well it is fulfilling the expectation of this literature.

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The last decade or so has seen an explosion of interest in the question of civil society and the role of media and information in democratic politics.ⁱ Specifically for Africa, the development of strong civil societies is seen as vital for democratization and democratic stability and in thinking about the role of the State.ⁱⁱ For example, Bratton argues that civil society holds the latent promise of political pluralism.ⁱⁱⁱ In the case of Zimbabwe, Makumbe goes further by claiming that civil society's blossoming is the cause of a whole set of recent positive changes in the common interest of the citizens of a number of African countries.^{iv}

One defining characteristic of this literature is that it focuses primarily on civil society's ability to resist penetration by the state.^v This is not surprising, of course, given the legacies of authoritarian governments and the suppression of political participation in many African contexts, both under colonialism and since independence.^{vi}

From a synthesis of a number of the leading definitions of the concept of civil society as applied in the African context,^{vii} it is possible to identify basically 3 categories of civil society functions: (1) limiting the state;^{viii} (2) incorporating and integrating various sectors of society;^{ix} and, related to the second function, but analytically distinct, (3) enabling communication within society and between society and the state.^x

Media has a clear role to play in each of these three realms. In the first, it is expected to act as a watchdog. To fill this function, it is most important that it be independent enough to aggressively investigate and publicize wrongdoing by state actors. In the second two, however, what becomes equally important is inclusiveness. In order to work to incorporate marginal actors and ensure genuine, broad-based communication, media needs to reflect as wide a range of constituencies as possible.

In all these three kinds of functions, the expectations of civil society literature overlap with those in a related literature on the "public sphere." Public sphere refers to those social structures and spaces where open, critical public discussion of matters of general interest happens. The public sphere includes much of civil society but is also linked to institutions of representative democracy, such as parliaments or legislatures.^{xi}

Of course, media is just one public sphere institution, but in South Africa as elsewhere, its importance is highlighted as other such institutions decline. The last decade in South Africa has seen demobilization of a once very vibrant political culture. This includes: the reduction of political parties to electoral machineries and the transformation of the “civic movements” of the 1980s and early 1990s into service organizations.

In this context, mass media gain added importance.^{xii} And in the literature on media, as with civil society earlier, wariness of the state looms large again. As a result much of the literature has a prescriptive tone, suggesting that the development of privately owned media enterprises is the key to the emergence of a fully functioning public sphere, in which government wrongdoing will be exposed and democratic debate can take place.^{xiii}

For Makumbe and a number of other political scientists (who have pointed to the importance of media in democratization processes and as a necessary component of civil society), dependence on the state is the main factor, along with resource constraints, lack of training, and inability to reach areas of the population that cripples media and its ability to nourish the free flow of ideas in civil society. And there is certainly reason to endorse this emphasis. In Zimbabwe, for example, breaking the state monopoly on information is absolutely necessary given the repressive posture of the Zimbabwean state and the ruling party, ZANU-PF.

However, this paper is less interested in how much we can expect from the kind of institutional reform implied by this scholarship, but rather from the assumptions about the role of the state and the place of media in African politics.

The paper discusses these issues in the context of a very advanced and well-developed media system – that of democratic South Africa – to see how well it is fulfilling the expectation of this literature.

The South African Case Study

In general, South African media does not suffer from the shortcomings I just listed: lack of independence, lack of resources, poor training, and insufficient coverage. So how is it doing in terms of keeping tabs on government and fostering broad-based debate? It appears as a mixed report card. Any assessment of South African media, must

acknowledge upfront that the democratic transition in South Africa has been accompanied by remarkable changes to the media landscape.

The key reforms include: Once heavily controlled by the apartheid state, the media, including publicly owned media, is protected by the new Constitution and free to criticize government. The media enjoys unprecedented access to state-held information through a generous Freedom of Information Act. Post-apartheid reforms have broken the state's monopoly over broadcasting and brought diversification of commercial print media. New titles have been introduced and we have seen real changes in the previously exclusive racial ownership patterns.^{xiv}

A wide range of choices for radio, television, and print media are available to an impressive majority of South Africans.

Specifically, radio covers ninety per cent of the population and broadcasts in all official eleven languages. The public broadcaster, the SABC, operates 20 radio stations, and in addition there are about 15 private radio stations. Over a ten-year period, South Africa's media regulator, the Independent Broadcasting Authority has awarded a total of 94 community radio licenses.

As regards TV, coverage is lower but still significant. Over sixty per cent of the population has direct access to television services. There are more than 4 million licensed television households in South Africa, making the country with by far the largest television audience in Africa.^{xv} There are 3 public television channels; one private, free-to-air TV station; a subscription-based cable service (with over a million subscribers); and a digital satellite television service that dominates satellite TV broadcasting in the rest of the continent.

For its part, mainstream print media includes seventeen daily newspapers, seven Sunday newspapers and 24 weekly newspapers publish nationally or regionally. Since 2002 a number of mass-based tabloids, including one in the Zulu language, have emerged.^{xvi}

In some respects the expected, healthy effects of a vigorous media are present. Recent history has shown South African media filling the role of democratic "watchdog" very well. The news media is very serious about exposing government corruption and inefficiency. A specific, high-level example is when reporters of the *Sunday Times* in

March 2000 exposed a senior official of the ruling party, the African National Congress, who had received favors in exchange for supporting a costly and probably unnecessary arms purchase. The subsequent police investigation implicated multinational weapons companies and led to the conviction of the official, at the time the parliamentary leader of the ANC. It also reached past the main players to put the financial dealings of the country's deputy president in an unfavorable light. This is just one example, and the weekly *Mail and Guardian* in particular has built a reputation for fearless reporting of this type.

But as we have seen, civil society and its cousin, the "public sphere," are tasked in democratic theory with more than just this. Beyond being a watchdog, media as a central part of the public sphere ideally also serve as a space of interest articulation and deliberation.

How do the South African media fare by that measure?

The picture I outlined earlier, of a diverse range of media outlets, serving citizens in a range of languages and in national as well as regional markets, seems hopeful. However, here is where the marks get a bit lower.

There are a number of other features that characterize the South African media, to which I have not yet pointed. Crucially, these features include segmentation along the largely coincident lines of class and race in South Africa, and a news model in which the former "white" media set the agenda for political reporting by outlets serving other groups.

The factor of segmentation

The lion's share of the television audience belongs to the three television channels operated by the public broadcaster, the SABC. Each of these is aimed at a particular racial-slash-income group. One reason for this is that while the SABC receives state subsidies and has a public service mandate; it is required to get the bulk of its revenue from private sources, mainly through advertising. And in South Africa, racial and market categories overlap to a staggering extent.

The stratification is unambiguous and profound. White South Africans, less than 10 per cent of a population of 44 million, enjoy the highest levels of income. “Asians” or “Indians” at 2.5 per cent of the population, average the second highest incomes, followed by coloureds, not quite 9 per cent. Africans, the majority of the population at 79 per cent, make up the bulk of the poor.^{xvii}

SABC 3, the most important free-to-air television channel, serves mainly white English-speakers and the small black elite.^{xviii} SABC2 is aimed at (white) Afrikaners, Afrikaans-speaking and mainly working class coloureds and other so-called “marginal language” groups. Finally, SABC1 aims for a younger, urban and majority black audience.

SABC3, the channel aimed at the white, English-speaking minority, is the ad revenue powerhouse, largely for reasons related to the purchasing power of its audience. Not coincidentally, SABC3 also features the most important nightly news bulletin.

Print media is similarly segmented. The dominant print media remain the papers that in the past served the white community exclusively. That media has undergone ownership and some editorial staff as well as management changes, but advertising and marketing imperatives again mean that it continues to be aimed primarily at the white minority. Guy Berger, a former newspaper editor and now journalism professor at one of the country’s leading journalism schools, underscores this point:

Wealth remains, however, largely among whites and advertising is still placed by white-staffed agencies. As a result, most media institutions stick with upmarket audiences, although some strides are belatedly made with tailored newspapers at the working-class level.^{xix}

This matters for a couple of reasons. First, it clouds the picture of an inclusive media. But perhaps even more importantly, it has implications for the diversity and breadth of the content of the media. To specify: the elite or what could be referred to as the opinion-leading media include the daily publications *Business Day* and *Business Report*, and the weekly *Financial Mail* as well as the *Sunday Times*. The formerly alternative paper, the *Mail and Guardian*, is also part of this group of media, though it is not as central. Similarly, the SABC3 television news as well as the news bulletins and actuality programs of SAfm, the public broadcaster’s flagship radio station, form part of

the opinion-leading media. All of these media that now style them as “South African media” existed under apartheid, limited to serving different factions of the white minority.

The News Model

A second-tier of media (the less important outlets of the mainstream press) exists in South Africa. Not only do the same companies that dominate South Africa’s elite media outlets own these media, but also the synergy extends to the content of news columns. In addition, journalists, editors, and media workers at a range of outlets, including people who worked or had worked their way up from the less important outlets of the mainstream press, basically rely on the opinion-leading or elite media for news agendas or cues. In interviews, they confirm that what they do in editorial meetings at those second tier news organizations is read *Business Day*, *Business Report* and *Sunday Times*, among others, discuss what has been aired on SAfm or the SABC3 news, and play catch-up, assign follow up stories, and so on.

The result is that while they do feature some coverage that is distinct from that in the opinion-leading media, in crucial ways they take their lead from this top tier.

Not surprisingly, survey data shows that opinion-leaders in the society – most notably politicians, business leaders and policy-makers – get their news almost exclusively from these top-tier media.^{xx}

These media outlets not only set the tone for the rest of the media, they also have implications for what people in these elite circles watch, read, and listen to. Also not surprisingly, they focus on issues of interest, and perspectives common to, their comparatively well-off readership.

According to a disenchanted former senior news producer for the SABC:

When I’ve been in Parliament for the annual Budget Speech by the minister of finance, I’ve been struck by how journalists confront [the finance minister Trevor] Manuel with constant questions about tax, capital gains, among others, and never ask him about issues to do with the poor, and I wonder how much that constant interaction with elite journalists

shapes his outlook. Clearly he must constantly be thinking of how to answer the tough questions posed to him about taxes and issues affecting middle and upper income earners, and he less often has to respond to challenges from other perspectives.^{xxi}

This paper argues that to understand what kinds of debate are taking place in the South African media, one need to study a comparatively small slice of that media, a slice which caters to a comparatively small, elite section of society – whites and the new black political and small economic elite. Research shows that there are real limits to the kind of information that is presented and the kind of debate that takes place in those contexts.

The paper makes this case through a brief discussion of the debate over the direction of national macroeconomic policy in the early years of ANC rule. It also looks at the attempts of some of the social movements that emerged after apartheid to use media to advance their demands on the state.

The tenor of economic policy debates

Probably the most significant policy shift of the new, post-apartheid government was the switch in 1996 from the Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP) to the Growth, Employment and Redistribution, (GEAR) policy.

For the 1994 elections the ANC campaigned with the RDP, which was essentially a program for economic growth through redistribution. It included elements such as massive investment in social services (including the construction by the state of one million houses; and the provision of electricity, clean water and sanitation to tens of millions), the creation of three to five thousand jobs per year and a redistribution of much agricultural land expropriated under apartheid.

In mid-1996, the ANC changed the RDP for GEAR. In contrast to the RDP, GEAR promotes economic growth over infrastructure development and redistribution. It aims to reduce government spending, cut corporate taxes, relax labor laws, and privatize state industries, all in the hopes of attracting foreign investors.

The switch to GEAR was in part the result of an ideological onslaught against the RDP from various sources, and these sources found a willing outlet in the South African

media.^{xxiii} Media coverage consistently blamed the RDP for failure in the economy,^{xxiii} and pushed for an all-out policy of structural adjustment. At the time, the currency, the Rand, depreciated in value by 25% in 4 months; interest rates remained high; the trade account balance moved in a highly erratic fashion; and the foreign exchange reserves were steadily depleted. These developments were linked directly to the government's decision, prompted by World Bank and business-sponsored advisers, to relax exchange controls among others, but this was conveniently downplayed in explanations for the economic downturn. The RDP got blamed for everything that was wrong with the South African economy, even long-term structural defaults inherited from apartheid. Those favoring GEAR were presented as "independent think-tanks" and as technical experts. Pro-redistribution voices within the ANC and its allies, more in tune with majority demands, were effectively marginalized, and often portrayed as a threat to South Africa's future economic health.

For example, as the Financial Mail, one of the chief cheerleaders of the GEAR policy, asserted at the time:

If government reacts negatively [to GEAR], it will ... discourage investment, undermine the Rand and lock this economy into a low-growth trap.^{xxxiv}

However, while it would have been difficult to tell from reading the media, this was far from a consensus view in South Africa, even among economists. One of the most powerful political constituencies in South Africa is the trade union movement, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), which is also an alliance partner of the ANC. COSATU, like the ANC, has a long history at the forefront for political and economic rights of the majority of South Africans. The total number of economically active citizens is estimated at 16.4 million people. COSATU continues to enjoy broad support, with currently just below 2 million dues-paying members,^{xxv} representing almost 13% of the working-age population.^{xxvi} Yet COSATU remains on the margins of most political debates in South African media, usually depicted as a self-interested actor engaged in power play. A phrase you often see associated with COSATU in the press is "flexing their muscles." This is against voices representing business interests, which are generally depicted as neutral and constructive.

The bulk of coverage of unions by South African newspapers is personality- or event-driven focusing predictably on strikes and wage negotiations. A very small number of articles (only 6 % in 2001) focus on substantive issues also raised by the unions such as labor law reform, HIV/AIDS, and privatization.^{xxvii}

In fact, COSATU has its own sophisticated policy analysis capacity. It has consistently come out strongly against GEAR, but its analysis has largely been shut out of the extensive media coverage of the strategy shift. In contrast, corporations and their spokespeople or boosters receive ample coverage.

This is therefore not a question of organized interests being able to get their opinions out, with a more diffused popular opposition. On the contrary, it's quite clearly one set of organized interests being reflected, and another shut out.

A further example of acceptable debate on these kinds of questions is the events around the reaction to a television documentary by John Pilger aired in early 1998 (April 21 to be exact) on SABC3. Pilger is a leftist journalist who is well regarded internationally – he is a past winner of the United Nations Association Media Prize and Britain's Journalist of the Year award. Specifically for South Africa, he had been a supporter of the liberation movements, so much so that he was kicked out of the country in the early 1960s by the apartheid regime. As such his views were in tune with the majority of South Africa. As a result, his documentary on the first four years of ANC rule appeared a natural for the public broadcaster. The problem is that the documentary turned out to be quite critical. Titled *Apartheid did not die*, it focused on racialized contrasts of wealth and poverty in the country, black and white living conditions, and documented dangerous working conditions in some of the main industries (particularly mining). It essentially made the argument that economic apartheid was continuing unabated. At first glance, the fact that the SABC showed this documentary seems like a positive sign in terms of the normative measures posed at the outset of this paper. Pilger's documentary was both highly critical of the government and outside the mainstream of debate on economic policy as characterized earlier, and it was aired in a prominent spot on the main channel. Moreover, the broadcast received wide coverage in the press. However, if we look at the events around the broadcast, and the content of the press coverage, it becomes clear that Pilger had crossed a line.

A number of unusual features characterize the broadcaster's handling of the film and media's reaction to it. On the day the film was screened the SABC's management for the first time ever deemed it necessary to run a disclaimer before the broadcast, a white screen with black lettering saying that Pilger's "... views and interpretations are not those of the SABC."^{xxviii} No other program had ever carried a disclaimer, and while in the immediate aftermath the broadcaster announced that all documentaries would in the future carry one, the practice hasn't been repeated.

Also unprecedented was an on-air panel discussion held after the film. This consisted of senior representatives of the ruling alliance and a pro-ANC business analyst. Although Pilger was in the country at the time, he was not invited to defend his views on the panel.

Finally, in mainstream print media as a whole, *Apartheid did not die* was the main subject of a staggering 34 items – including unsigned editorials. Overwhelmingly this coverage dismissed the film as ideological and failed to comment on the substantive economic critique advanced by the documentary. Moreover, in many instances this coverage was personalized and xenophobic.

This episode appears as an exception that proves the rule. Perspectives critical of the government's strategy of economic liberalization and limited social change are not completely shut out, but they are perceived by and presented in mainstream media as threatening and unacceptable.

In the South African case as elsewhere on the continent, it is difficult to find out what poor people think about the government's economic policies. For example, the Afrobarometer, the leading and most reliable of the opinion surveys on and generated inside South Africa, only measures perceptions of government legitimacy or services in general, not of specific programs like redistribution or

privatization. As a result it is hard to pin down what kinds of programs respondents are objecting to or endorsing.

However, the popularity of COSATU, and the ability of social movements to mobilize protest, does give some sense of the opposition to GEAR, and the programs associated with it. It is also revealing that Afrobarometer reported last year that there has been a 10-point drop in the trust expressed by South Africans in independent newspapers. There may be a lot of reasons for this, but it would be reasonable to suggest that the majority feels its opinions are not heard.

The Coverage of “New” Social Movements

One of the defining characteristics of the post-apartheid polity is the emergence of a range of organizations, outside of legislative politics, that are making direct demands on the state and capital. These organizations are broadly known as the “new social movements.” The rest of the paper discusses how the new social movements are covered. Coverage of the new social movements, points to interesting results. My research indicates that the elite media can sometimes cover anti-government, pro-poor voices sympathetically. But here again it seems that social movements are successful in getting coverage only to the extent that their demands can be framed in terms that fit within the narrow range of debate described above.

The paper makes this case by looking very briefly at two of South Africa’s many lively, popularly-based movements that have opposed government policies and that have arisen in the last few years. The two groups studied for this paper have been given very different receptions in the media. One, the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC), the group advocating for public provision of AIDS medicines has been embraced by South African and now international media, and has achieved significant, though still incomplete, policy success.^{xxix} The other, the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF), which advocates for public provision of basic services such as water and electricity, has been largely shut out by the media and has seen most of its policy goals unmet.

Since its founding in 1998, the TAC has achieved a number of victories: President Mbeki publicly ceased to question the link between HIV and AIDS; the government was compelled by the Constitutional Court to make anti-retrovirals available to pregnant women and children; and most recently, the government has announced it would implement a countrywide treatment program through the public sector. TAC has also won a number of victories against multinational drug companies to lower the prices of anti-retroviral drugs.^{xxx}

Mainstream media coverage of TAC has been overwhelmingly positive. According to TAC's national manager, the media has been a substantial resource in the success of the organization's campaigns. In 2003, TAC mounted a civil disobedience campaign and despite its militant posture, during this campaign, to quote the same TAC leader, "for the most part the media stayed on TAC's side." This was also true of other TAC campaigns, including one in which they publicly and illegally imported generic AIDS medicine into the country.^{xxxi}

In contrast, the APF, which also engages in civil disobedience, has received very little coverage, and when it is covered, it is often depicted as criminal. The largest local affiliate of the APF is the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee (SECC).

The SECC organizes residents in one of the country's largest townships struggling with increased electricity tariffs, and has engaged in illegal reconnection of services cut off for non-payment. Coverage of this group in particular has cast it as renegade and lawless, or focused (derisively) on the group's leader, Trevor Ngwane, who was expelled from the ANC for criticizing privatization.^{xxxii} In mainstream media coverage there is little or no analysis on the electricity crisis itself, but rather on a supposed "culture of non-payment" stemming from the boycott era of the 1970s and 1980s. This is basically demonizing of rent and service boycotts by township as a form of protest against inadequate services offered by the apartheid state throughout the 1980s.^{xxxiii}

In fact, the first significant coverage of APF activities actually appeared in the *Washington Post* in November 2001.^{xxxiv} In an interview, the *Washington Post* reporter in South Africa, Jon Jeter, said normally, as a foreign correspondent, he takes his cue from the local media, but in this case he received word of the story through local

activists.^{xxxv} At the time, this led to some debate in South Africa as to why the South African media did not report the story in the first place, but little has come of that “debate.”^{xxxvi}

Both TAC and the APF are mass based, majority black organizations that make demands on the state for services, oppose government policy, and engage in civil disobedience. Why is one “allowed in” and the other not? Part of the difference in the media coverage given to TAC and the APF certainly has to do with international attention given to the AIDS crisis as well as the media savvy of the organizations involved.

But this is not a sufficient explanation. For example, the worldwide attention brought to Mbeki’s AIDS denialism is partly a result of TAC’s protests, covered extensively in local media and picked up abroad.^{xxxvii} And while AIDS is certainly an urgent issue, access to basic services such as water and electricity can be and often is also a matter of life and death. For example, the lack of access to clean water resulted in a deadly cholera epidemic in squatter camps in urban parts of KwaZulu-Natal in 2000 that continued well into 2001 and in which hundreds of people were killed.

Coverage of TAC indicates that, with few excerpts, there is a clear disconnect between what TAC was saying and how its demands were being represented. To be brief, this paper argues that TAC’s success can be traced to the media primarily framing HIV/AIDS as a health issue and not as a question of economic inequality per se. Both TAC and the APF frame their own struggles as primarily about social justice and socio-economic rights. TAC founder Zackie Achmat has written that the group “unashamedly pursues a social democratic, pro-poor and pro-human rights agenda.”^{xxxviii} But media coverage is dominated not by the broader questions of access to health care but by clashes between TAC leaders and the ANC, particularly President Thabo Mbeki.^{xxxix}

Secondarily, media coverage focuses on the plight of AIDS sufferers as victims in need of help. Rarely does it link the devastation of AIDS to wider issues of economic inequality. The media then is sympathetic to TAC insofar as the issue can appear as a sort of natural disaster. But when TAC presses redistribution and public responsibility for the welfare of South Africa’s poor more broadly, its analysis is muted or shut out, which is what happens to the APF all the time.

Conclusion

The paper used the South African media as a sort of case study for examining some of the claims made for civil society as a realm in which democracy can be promoted and strengthened in Africa, particularly as it relates to the role of the State. It began by identifying three kinds of positive, democratizing functions attributed to civil society: putting limits on the state; incorporating and empowering various groups; and promoting the flow of information. The paper noted that these are also functions attributed to what we call the public sphere, and that media is a key institution for all of these functions. It argued that at first glance, the South African media appears vigorous, diverse and competitive. It performs its watchdog role outstandingly. But in terms of serving as a space of interest articulation and deliberation, the South African media comes short by failing to include the voices of the poor, black majority. Two key features of the South African media – its segmentation and its limited news model – is suggested as resulting in real limits in the kind of information that is presented and the kind of debate that takes place in the South African mainstream media. And these features are of course tied to the very inequalities and democratic deficit that media is expected to help correct.

In conclusion then: The civil society literature tends to confuse what civil society should do with what it actually does in practice. A number of critics of the civil society and public sphere concepts in the first world have pointed out that these often are realms in which social inequality is exacerbated, not mitigated. The case of the South African media, I am arguing, indicates that we should bear these critiques in mind when we think about how civil society can promote and deepen democracy in Africa. I'm not suggesting that we abandon the basic premises offered by civil society theorists as they are applied to Africa. In fact, the initial exuberance around the promise of civil society is already showing signs of wearing off, and this is as it should be. But rather than just rejecting the whole framework, what we need to do now is look much more closely at the institutional arrangements and structures within civil society, and under what conditions certain kinds of civil society promote the sort of democratic outcomes that we are looking for.

ⁱ Abonyi Nnaemeka, 2010. "The Media and Propagation of Democratic Ideals in Emerging Democracies: The Nigerian Experience from 1999-2007," *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research In Business*, 2 (2): 78-98; Monroe Price, "Media Transitions in the Rear-View Mirror: Some Reflections," *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, 22 (4): 485-496; Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff 1999 (eds.), *Civil Society and the Critical Imagination in Africa: Critical Perspectives* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press); John Keane 1998, *Civil Society: Old Images, New Visions* (Cambridge: Polity Press); Mahmood Mamdani 1996, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press); A Van Rooy 1998, *Civil Society and the Aid Industry* (London: Earthscan).

ⁱⁱ Godfred Bokpin, 2009. "An examination of the governance practices of Ghanaian media institutions," *Corporate Governance*, 9 (5): 600-609; Isaac A. Blankson and Patrick D. Murphy, eds., 2007. *Negotiating Democracy: Media Transformations in Emerging Democracies*. (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press); John Harbeson 1994, "Civil Society and the Political Renaissance in Africa," in Harbeson, D Rotchild and Naomi Chazan (eds.), *Civil Society and the State in Africa* (Boulder, CO: Lynn Rienner); David Lewis, 2002, "Civil Society in African Contexts: Reflections on the Usefulness of a Concept," *Development and Change*, 33 (2).

ⁱⁱⁱ Michael Bratton, "Beyond the state: Civil Society and Associated Life in Africa," *World Politics*, 41 (1989), p407-30.

^{iv} John Makumbe, 1998, "Is there a civil society in Africa," *International Affairs*, 74 (2), p.309. See also Wendy Willems, 2004. "Peasant Demonstrators, Violent Invaders: Representations of Land in the Zimbabwean Press," *World Development*, 32 (10): 1767-1783; Herman Wasserman (ed.) 2010. *Popular Media, Democracy and Development in Africa* (Taylor and Francis);

^v Patrick Chabal (ed.) *Political Domination in Africa*

^{vi} E Gyimah-Boadi, 1996, "'Civil Society in Africa,'" *Journal of Democracy*, 7 (2), pp.118-132.

^{vii} Referenced above.

^{viii} These include: exercising pressures or controls upon the state; challenging the state's abuses of authority; monitoring human rights and the rule of law; and monitoring and enhancing the legitimacy of elections.

^{ix} Supplementing state services; incorporating marginal groups into the political process; providing extra-state means for communities to raise their level of material development; and providing social capital.

^x Building a constituency for economic and political reforms; enhancing the responsiveness of the state to societal interests and needs; and opening and pluralizing the flow of information.

^{xi} See Jurgen Habermas, 1989, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Cambridge MA, MIT Press); Peter Dahlgren 1999, *Television and the Public Sphere* (London: Sage); Lynette Steenveld and Larry Strelitz 1998, "The 1995 Rugby World Cup

and the politics of nation-building in South Africa,” *Media, Culture and Society*. 20: pp.609-629.

^{xii} I have argued elsewhere that news media were an important actor in helping shape the outcome of the transition to democracy in South Africa. That is, through actively advising members of both sides of the negotiations and by consistently advocating certain outcomes in their news and editorial output, a certain segment of journalists, editors and opinion writers, in particular, were effective in pushing for a certain kind of transition; namely a limited political and economic liberalization that was undertaken without substantial transformation of the social structure. These very limits to social transformation that the media were part of establishing help explain how the media have developed in the ensuing decade. See Sean Jacobs (2004), *Public Sphere, Media and Democracy in South Africa* (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of London, Birkbeck College).

^{xiii} For Makumbe, among the three major factors contributing to the slow development of civil society is the control exercised by the state over media in most of Africa (p312).

^{xiv} See Herman Wasserman, 2010, “[Freedom's just another word? Perspectives on media freedom and responsibility in South Africa and Namibia](#),” *The International Communication Gazette* 72 (7), November: 567; Francis Nyamnjoh, “*Racism, Ethnicity and the Media in Africa: Reflections Inspired by Studies of Xenophobia in Cameroon and South Africa*,” *Spectrum*, 45 (1): 57-93; Guy Berger, 1999, “*Towards an Analysis of the South African Media and Transformation, 1994-1999*,” *Transformation*, 38. 84-115; Jane Duncan 1999, “*Talk Left, Act Right: What Constitutes Transformation in South African Media*,” *Communication Law in Transition Newsletter*, 1, (6) June 10. <http://pcmlp.socleg.ox.ac.uk/transition/issue06/duncan.htm>.

^{xv} (GCIS, 2004, *South African Yearbook 2003/2004*, p145).

^{xvi} Information from *South Africa Yearbook 2003/2004* published by the Government Information and Communications Systems (Pretoria: Government Printer, 2003).

^{xvii} Marlene Roefs et al (2001), *State of the People*, (Pretoria: HSRC Publishers).

^{xviii} By “black” here I’m referring to all the non-white groups.

^{xix} ‘Media “manufacturing” the democracy debate,’ Mail & Guardian Online, February 18, 2004. Online at <http://www.mg.co.za/Content/13.asp?cg=Insight-Converse&ao=31445>.

^{xx} Richard Steyn, 1994, “The transition process and the South African media,” *Editor and Publisher*, 127 (2), pp.44-46. The media habits of political and business elites were measured through a number of elite surveys administered separately by research units at Idasa (of members of parliament and senior government officials) and by researchers at the department of political science at the University of Stellenbosch (of policy and business elites).

^{xxi} Brett Davidson (2002), Personal communication with the author.

^{xxii} Paul Williams and Ian Taylor, 2000, "Neoliberalism and the Political Economy of the New South Africa," *New Political Economy*, 5 (1), pp. 20-41. See also Fanto Cheru, 2001, "Overcoming apartheid's legacy: the ascendancy of neoliberalism in South Africa's anti-poverty strategy," *Third World Quarterly*. 22 (4). 505-527.

^{xxiii} See Williams and Taylor, 2000, p32.

^{xxiv} *Financial Mail*, 8 March 1996, quoted in Williams and Taylor (Idem).

^{xxv} <http://www.cosatu.org.za>.

^{xxvi} *CIA World Fact Book*, accessed online on January 20, 2005.

^{xxvii} *MediaTenor* 2001, "Unions Struggle to Get Heard"

^{xxviii} Norm Dixon, 1998. "Pilger reveals the 'new' South Africa," *Green Left Weekly Online*, June. <http://www.greenleft.org.au/back/1998/319/319p24b.htm>

^{xxix} For an in-depth analysis of the TAC and media, see Sean Jacobs and Krista Johnson, 2009. "Media, Social Movements and the State: Competing Images of HIV/AIDS in South Africa," *African Studies Quarterly*, 9 (4): Online at <http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v9/v9i4a8.htm>; Nicoli Nattras, "AIDS and the Scientific Governance of Medicine in Post-Apartheid South Africa," *African Affairs*, 107 (427): 157-176; M.W. Makgoba, 2002. "Politics, the media and science in HIV/AIDS: the perils of pseudoscience," *Vaccine*, 20: 1899-1904.

^{xxx} Zackie Achmat, 2001, "Defying the Drug Cartel. The South African Campaign for Access to Essential Medication," *Multinational Monitor*, 22 (1 & 2), January/February. Online at <http://www.multinationalmonitor.org/mm2001/01jan-feb/interview.html>. Retrieved on July 15, 2003; Chris Barron, 2003, "So Many Questions with Zackie Achmat," *Sunday Times*. 20 July. See also the TACs website: <http://www.tac.org.za>.

^{xxxi} Quoted in Steven Friedman and Shauna Mottiar, 2004, "A Moral to the Tale: The Treatment Action Campaign and the Politics of HIV/AIDS," Center for Civil Society, University of KwaZulu-Natal. See also conclusions of January 2003 MediaTenor media analysis: "The treatment of HIV/Aids dominates Aids-related issues in the media, who have taken on the treatment issue with great vigor, acting as a watchdog over government actions" (HIV/Aids and the South African media," [Mediatoolbox.co.za](http://mediatoolbox.co.za), January 28, 2003. Accessed on December 12, 2004.). See also Treatment Action Campaign (2003), *Report for January 2002-February 2003* (Web: www.tac.org.za/Documents/report02to03pdf); and Drew Forrest, (2003). "Social movements: 'ultra-left' or 'global citizens'?" *Mail & Guardian*, January 31, pp.8-9.

^{xxxii} Trevor Ngwane, 2003, "Sparks in the Township." *New Left Review*. 22 (July/August): 37-56; Ngwane, 2002a, "Interview," in Leo Zeilig (ed.), *Class Struggle and Resistance in Africa* (London: New Clarion Press); Ngwane, 2002b, Interview with the Author, Johannesburg. June 18.

^{xxxiii} David McDonald, (2002), "No More, No Service," *Alternatives Journal*. 28 (2), p17.

^{xxxiv} "For South Africa's Poor, a New Power Struggle," *Washington Post*, November 6, 2001, pA1.

^{xxxv} Interview with Jon Jeter, Johannesburg, June 19, 2002. Jeter later recounted these protests in his book *Flat Broke in the Free Market: How Globalization Fleeced Working People* (W W Norton, 2009), especially Chapter 4.

^{xxxvi} See the rare “debate” around Jeter’s coverage of the electricity crisis in the *Business Day* in 2001. Contributions include that of the paper’s former Washington correspondent, the economically rightwing Simon Barber (November 28, 2001) who criticized the *Washington Post* for publishing the piece and urging the South African ambassador to officially complain to the *Post*’s editors. Barber also called Jeter “misinformed”; David McDonald, the head of the Municipal Services Project jointly conducted by Wits University in Johannesburg and Queen’s University in Canada (“Seriousness of Service Crisis not Understood,” December 11, 2001); and a letter by a leading South African journalist, Mark Gevisser, in support of Jeter’s reporting.

^{xxxvii} *Media Tenor*, 2002, “AIDS still a ‘black’ issue for South African media?” *Media Tenor SA Research Journal*, 9, December 1, p7.

^{xxxviii} Zackie Achmat, 2004 John Foster Lecture, “Hiv/Aids And Human Rights: A New South African Struggle.” (11/10/04). Source: <http://www.tac.org.za>.

^{xxxix} Jo Stein, (2001), “HIV/AIDS and the Media. A Literature Review,” Centre for AIDS Development Research and Evaluation (CADRE), Johannesburg; p9; see also Stein (2003), What’s News: Perspectives on HIV/AIDS Advocacy in the South African Media. Center for Social Science Research, Working Paper No. 37; Kerry Cullinan, (2001), “The Media and HIV/AIDS. A blessing and a curse,” *AIDS Bulletin*, 10, July, pp.35-39; Judith Soal (2000), AIDS Media in South Africa. AIDS Media Roundtable. <http://www.mediachannel.org/views/roundtables/>; Thandeka Teyise, (2003), “Media coverage of HIV/AIDS in South Africa” (audio interview with Richard Delate, of CADRE.), www.health-e.org.za/news/article_audio.php?uid=20030518. See also, Gideon de Wet, (2004), “Agenda setting and HIV/AIDS news sources, implications for journalism education: An exploratory study,” *Ecquid Novi*, 25 (1), pp. 105.